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R 311525Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5769
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 9033
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY LIMA 5095
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0341
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5716
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP ADMIN/CHAIRS//
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUETIAA/CSG SOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

UNCLAS BOGOTA 003872

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: COLOMBIA: HOMICIDES PLUMMET, ESPECIALLY CIVILIAN
DEATHS

Summary

¶1. Data from the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ), a prominent human rights group, show "political" homicides involving civilians fell by almost 70 percent during Uribe's first term. Overall, Colombia's homicides dropped by 40 percent in the last four years, reaching their lowest level in 20 years. End Summary.

CCJ Report: Averages Mask Trends

¶2. The Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ), a well-know human rights group, reports political violence during President Uribe's tenure remained roughly constant from 2002 to 2006 at nearly 14 per day. CCJ asserts this rate is similar to the 14 daily average registered during the six years prior to 2002. CCJ also credits the AUC demobilization with cutting paramilitary murders from 1,756 to 1,060 persons a year. CCJ's use of multi-year averages, however, masks the underlying trends in both instances.

CCJ Data: "Political" Killings Sharply Down

¶3. Data provided to poloff by CCJ paints a far more positive picture. Progress during Uribe's first term is striking (see Table): political homicides involving civilians fell by almost 70 percent, driven by sharp drops in murders by paramilitaries (down 82 percent) and by the FARC/ELN (down 63 percent). The data extends only to mid-2006, when the demobilization process had not yet finished. CCJ continues to collect this data, which will show if this positive trend has continued since the demobilization of the last paramilitary block in August 2006. The increase in alleged extrajudicial killings will be addressed septel.

"Political" Homicides

	'01-2	'02-3	'03-4	'04-5	'05-6	percent /-
By paras	2,015	1,594	1,234	515	354	- 82
By FARC/ELN	634	669	426	272	235	- 63

By COLMIL	135	183	226	208	262	94
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subtotal	2,784	2,446	1,886	995	851	- 69

Notes:

- Each annual interval is July to June, e.g. 7/02 - 6/03.
- Includes extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances.
- Counts killings only outside of combat.

Source: Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ).

Total Homicides: Lowest in 20 Years

14. Colombia's aggregate homicide rate is at its lowest level since 1987. Defense Ministry data show total killings down by 40 percent in four years, from a peak of nearly 29,000 in 2002 when President Uribe took office to about 17,000 in 2006. This overall homicide figure consists of all murders committed with any kind of weapon, including those involving illegal armed groups.

Drucker